REMARKS

The Office Action mailed December 5, 2006 considered claims 2-4, 7-9, 12, 14-16, 18-21 and 29-39. Claims 2-4, 12, 14, 18-21, 29, 30, 31, 34, 36-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Balabine et al. (US 6,442,548) hereinafter *Balabine* in view of Mani et al. (US 6,654,734) hereinafter *Mani*. Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Balabine* in view of *Mani* further in view of Traversat et al. (US 6,366,945) hereinafter *Traversat*. Claims 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Balabine* in view of *Mani* further in view of Omoigui (US 2003/0126136) hereinafter *Omoigui*. Claims 8 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Balabine* in view of *Mani* further in view of Braden-Harder et al. (US 5,630,121) hereinafter *Braden-Harder*. Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Balabine* in view of *Mani* further in view of Malkemus et al. (US 5,619,692) hereinafter *Malkemus*. Claims 33 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Balabine* in view of *Mani* further in view of http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=XPath&oldid=1315639 hereinafter *XPath*.[1]

By this paper, claims 31, 37, 38, and 39 have been amended.[2] Claims 2-4, 7-9, 12, 14-16, 18-21, and 29-39 remain pending. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

As a preliminary matter, applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephonic interview of February 8, 2007.

For a general summary of the invention, the Examiner's attention is directed to the previous office action responses where applicants have described the invention in general terms to facilitate the Examiner's review. Rather than reproducing that summary here, applicants would like to focus on at least one aspect of the present invention, as now claimed, which differs in distinct ways from what is disclosed by the art cited in the Office Action. In particular, the claims each now recite method steps for accessing objects arranged in a hierarchy in a database.

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[1] Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicant reserves the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.

[2] Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, but with particularity at page 10 paragraph [0019] of applicants' specification.

Each of the claims recites defining relationships linking different attributes of different objects *in a relationship not identified by the hierarchy of the database, the relationship not being explicitly identified in the database, and not ascertainable by checking attribute names in the database.* A specific example of this is illustrated at paragraphs [0019]-[0021] of applicant's specification. Specifically, paragraph [0021] illustrates a defined relationship which is based on the "manager" attribute of one object and the "direct reports" attribute of a different object. While the hierarchy of the database includes separate manager and direct report relationships, there is no hierarchical relationship in the database linking two objects using a relationship created by these distinct and separate attributes that are not otherwise linked hierarchically in the database.

As discussed during the interview, the art cited in the Office Action differs from what is recited in that any relationships disclosed are already hierarchically defined. For example, Mani cites eight different relationships including: child, parent, attribute, reachability, ancestor, obligation, exclusivity, and entrance location. See Mani at Col. 6, lines 26-33. However, each of these relations is defined hierarchically in the overall data structure. See Col. 6, line 41 – Col. 9, line 2. In stark and direct contrast, the claims of the present application recite that a relationship is created between different objects based on previously hierarchically unrelated attributes.

Balabine does not compensate for the deficiencies of Mani. For example, Balabine shows that a directory display can be used to represent a database. Figure 1 of Balabine illustrates a prior art relational database including a customer table, an order table, and an inventory table. Figure 5C illustrates how these three tables may be represented in directory structure. See also col. 6 beginning at line 23-47. However, the relationships used to identify objects in a database are either based on table names (customer, order or inventory) and not relationships linking different attributes of different objects, or data items specifically identified in the table (customer name, customer address, customer id, item id, quantity date, etc). See Figure 1 of Balabine. However, Balabine does not show relationships linking different attributes of different objects in a relationship not identified by the hierarchy of the database, the relationship not being explicitly identified in the database, and not ascertainable by checking attribute names in the database. Notably, while Balabine does show linking between tables by linking data items (see e.g. Figure 1), the linking is simply well known relational database
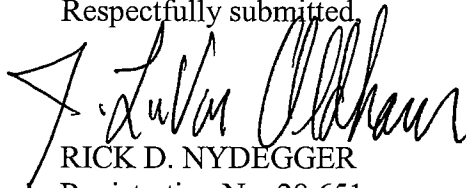
linking which links actual data items and not a linking by a previously undefined attribute relationship.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the other rejections to the claims are now moot and do not, therefore, need to be addressed individually at this time. It will be appreciated, however, that this should not be construed as Applicant acquiescing to any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action regarding the cited art or the pending application, including any official notice. Instead, Applicant reserves the right to challenge any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action at any appropriate time in the future, should the need arise. Furthermore, to the extent that the Examiner has relied on any Official Notice, explicitly or implicitly, Applicant specifically requests that the Examiner provide references supporting the teachings officially noticed, as well as the required motivation or suggestion to combine the relied upon notice with the other art of record.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at 801-533-9800.

Dated this 5th day of March, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

RICK D. NYDEGGER
Registration No. 28,651
J. LAVAR OLDHAM
Registration No. 53,409
Attorneys for Applicant
Customer No. 47973

RDN:JLO:crb
CRB0000003320V001